

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

# STATE

OCTOBER 2011



***Helping  
in Haiti***



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## On the Cover

Vice Consul Ajani Husbands, co-coordinator of the reading and life-skills program at the Rose Mina Orphanage in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, teaches a girl how to wash her hands.  
*Photograph by Benjamin Edwards*



## National Work-Life and Disability Employment Awareness Month

In 1988, Congress designated October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This month, we also mark the two-year anniversary of the Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Division in the Office of Employee Relations. DRAD centralizes services for those employees with disabilities and reconfirms the Department's commitment to them.

In 2003, Congress also declared October to be National Work-Life Month, which recognizes the belief that there should be less of a conflict between work and family, and a better balance is in the best interest of national worker productivity.

Both congressional designations point to one idea: There are many ways to work. If we use all the tools at our disposal to create flexibility, improve access and incorporate talent into our team, we can achieve our mission. This month, I want to tell you about the HR office that works to provide access for the disabled and improve work-life balance for all employees.

HR's Office of Employee Relations, led by Director Mary Ellen Hickey, is home to the two divisions primarily responsible for managing policies and programs supporting Disability Employment and Work Life. DRAD Chief Patricia Pittarelli heads a team of professionals who recruit, place and accommodate talented individuals with disabilities in accordance with Executive Orders 13548 and 13164. This work follows in a long tradition of building a fair, open and positive federal workplace as an example for all America.

Employee Relations also houses the Work Life Division under Chief Judy Ikels, who with her team of HR specialists, manages all the employee benefits and programs supporting workplace flexibility. Recent developments include implementation of the 2010 Telework Enhancement Act, which required every position to be evaluated for telework eligibility and each employee informed of his or her eligibility. While there will always be areas in the Department unsuited for telework, such as those where the work is classified, overall telework participation has increased. About a quarter of our domestic staff, both Foreign Service and Civil Service, take advantage of some kind of compressed work schedule, and roughly 10 percent of our domestic and overseas staff works part time. Again, not every job can accommodate a flexible schedule, but where possible we believe flexibility helps both employee and manager to get the work done.

One benefit that is open to all employees is the personalized resource and referral services program called IQ: Information Quest. Available online and by phone 24/7, Information Quest connects employees with resources in

communities all over the United States, from anywhere in the world. For example, it lets employees search for child care, adult care, cleaning services, realtors, schools and fitness centers nationwide. You can have your will and other legal documents prepared at a discounted rate or have a geriatric care manager assess your parent's overall condition for free. More than 5,000 employees have contacted IQ so far this year. If you have not looked into it, please do. The Department is paying IQ a per capita fee so that you and your family members can get help when needed.

More about Information Quest is at <http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/Workforce/EmployeePrograms/Pages/IQInformationQuest.aspx>.

And please visit the HR/ER/DRAD Web site (<http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/Workforce/DisabilityReasonableAccommodation/Pages/DisabilityServices.aspx>) and the WLD Web site (<http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/EmployeeRelations/WorkLifeDivision/Pages/default.aspx>).

If you have any general comments or suggestions about how we can help to make the workplace better for you, send them to the Sounding Board or via unclassified e-mail at DG Direct.

Nancy J. Powell  
Director General





## Change of Heart?

As one who served in the Foreign Service in the “old days,” I find recent *State Magazine* articles concerning support and understanding for gay employees to be almost too good to be true. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security used to aggressively pursue even a rumor of homosexual behavior, ferret out the accused and dismiss them for behavior unbecoming a Foreign Service officer or as a security risk.

Thus, please excuse my skepticism about this supposed change of heart. Was there ever any apology or restitution for those whose careers were held back or cut short because of their orientation? I truly hope the old days have in fact given way to new days at State and that this is not just a “cause du jour.”

**Paul J. Andersen**  
*Retired Foreign Service officer*  
*Christchurch, Va.*

## Beyond the Call

The staff at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb recently went above and beyond the call of duty to provide our company with some desperately needed help in the midst of

a crisis we suffered during a worldwide managers meeting in Korcula in June.

In brief, when our chief financial officer died suddenly of a heart attack, we contacted the embassy and received help—both immediately and over the next few days as arrangements were made for a cremation and permission to take the remains home. The treatment we received from embassy staff members Sam Healy, Justin Hekel and Verica Haramincic was absolutely first-class in every way. They were responsive, knew precisely what to do, carried it out in record time and did it all with genuine compassion and sensitivity.

Americans on the trip were proud of our representatives in Croatia, and our colleagues from other countries were duly impressed. All was done with the utmost efficiency, professionalism and compassion. Under the circumstances, we could not have hoped for more.

**Tony Weir**  
*Director, Whitford Worldwide*  
*Elverson, Pa.*

## Diversity Training

In light of a recent diplomatic incident

in India, I would urge you to think about encouraging individuals to write about their experiences related to diversity. I think this will provide insights on cultural issues from a global perspective.

All State Department employees serving overseas are looked upon as diplomats representing the United States. So any comments they make come under close scrutiny, especially those related to cultural and racial issues.

During orientation, all specialists and generalists go through a diversity seminar at the Foreign Service Institute. This may need to be taken up a notch—to a mandatory class on diversity before every tour. Posts should offer programs on local cultural norms and issues on a regular basis.

The Office of Civil Rights does a commendable job on diversity awareness. It is the duty of every State Department employee to uphold and value our great organization's core values and beliefs: respect for diversity, human rights and human dignity.

**Krishna Das**  
*Foreign Service specialist*  
*U.S. Embassy, Pretoria*



Brian Campbell, left, and Jennifer Stein show off their winning style in the Main State lobby.



## Franklin Fellows Lead Tennis Team to Win

Jennifer Stein and Brian Campbell led the Department's 2011 tennis team to its third consecutive Intergovernmental Agency Tennis League Doubles Championship title in July in Washington, D.C.

Founded in 1932, the Intergovernmental Agency Tennis League is said to be the longest running athletic competition in the federal government. It was the Department's ninth championship win, a record bested only by the Army and Navy teams, which hold 25 and 15 titles, respectively.

In the competition, each team fielded five doubles teams, and most teams had 20 or more players on their rosters. The Department's roster had 41 players. Teams were not grouped by age, gender or ability.

Stein is a former top singles star and was twice named an All-American at Washington University in Missouri. She is

a Franklin Fellow and foreign affairs officer in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

Campbell is a former top singles and doubles player and was twice named All-American and inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame at Truman State University in Missouri. He is also a Franklin Fellow and special advisor in the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of Public and Diplomatic Liaison.

"Jenny and Brian are among the finest players to have represented the Department in my many years of coaching the team," said team coach John Wilson. "We finished number one in a very competitive league, and Jenny and Brian came through in the clutch time and time again."

Under the Franklin Fellows program, talented individuals from universities, nongovernmental organizations and private-sector employers work at the Department for one to two years.



# Embassy IRM Team Aids Bangkok School

In June, the information resource management team at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, opened the doors to the Phetchaburi Panya Nukul School's computer lab. Ambassador Kristie Kenney presided over the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

For the five months prior, the team had improved the deteriorating computer infrastructure at the school, which serves special needs students, particularly those with autism and Down syndrome. Working with the American Chamber of Commerce and Western Digital Corp.,

the team outfitted the school with more than 50 recycled computers and networked the school's several buildings. Team members, from the embassy mailroom to the information systems center, helped prepare the donated computers.

"In my three years in Bangkok, I have never witnessed our section come together in such a profound way," said Information Systems Security Officer Sam Berardi. "There was a strong desire to succeed."

American and Thai IRM staff members witnessed the computers' impact. Ulit "Egg" Phahonyothin, Bangkok IRM's administrative assistant and the mastermind of the project's logistics, said he felt rejuvenated and empowered.

"This is unusual for IRM," he said. "We get so caught up in our own world that we tend to forget about others, but today we made a difference."

Information Management Officer Doyle Lee said, "Seeing a child log on for the first time, browse directly to YouTube and laugh out loud made every moment of our work worthwhile."

The community service event ended at the Sirindhorn International Environmental Park, where the team, Ambassador Kenney and others planted mangrove trees to rehabilitate the coastal ecosystem.

"I feel so happy that we came to help people in need and contribute to our beautiful Thailand," said Telephone Supervisor Haruthai "Aor" Chaisena.



**Thailand**



One of the school's students shows heart-felt gratitude for the refurbished computers.

## AAFSW Art&BookFair This Month

The 51st annual Art&BookFair of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide will be held Oct. 14–23 in the Exhibit Hall in Main State. The fair will feature thousands of used books, paintings, art objects, textiles and valuables from around the world plus CDs, DVDs, maps, ephemera, stamps and coins.

On Oct. 14 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., attendance is limited to Department of State badge holders, spouses and escorted guests. From Oct. 17–21, the fair runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for badge holders and their guests. On the weekends of Oct. 15–16 and Oct. 22–23, the fair runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is open to the public through the C Street entrance. On Oct. 23, all items are half price.

The fair accepts Visa, Discover, Mastercard and personal checks. Proceeds benefit Foreign Service families, community projects and the AAFSW Scholarship Fund. More information is at [www.aafsw.org](http://www.aafsw.org).

## Food Drive Fed by Competitive Spirit

Department employees are known to be generous, as evidenced by Combined Federal Campaign and Toys for Tots giving, among other projects. But when giving was combined with competition, as it was this summer by the leadership of the Bureau of Human Resources, the result was a surge in food donations for the needy.

It began with a challenge among the deputy assistant secretaries in the HR front office to see which DAS could collect the most food during July for the Feds Feed Families campaign. HR offices kicked in to support the DASes, and a month of fevered competition ensued. HR's Shared Services unit came up with themes, such as Baker's Day, which focused on donating flour, sugar, salt and baking mixes, and Blue Jean Day, which allowed jeans to be worn if the wearer brought food to donate. The Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment built an iPod out of donated food cans.

Every HR office participated, and more than 5,000 pounds of food was collected. DAS Linda Tagliatela was crowned the competition's winner.

Other bureaus participated in the drive, including African Affairs, which donated more than 1,000 pounds, and the Department in total collected more than 12,000 pounds. The Bureau of Administration did much of the heavy lifting, packing and weighing of all donations for delivery.

Many of those involved said collecting food was an opportunity to come together across bureaus and offices to support the needy.





# Embassy Ottawa Swings Its Doors Open

On the weekend of June 4–5, the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, Canada, opened its doors and gave guided tours of the chancery to almost 900 people from 22 countries as part of the embassy's participation in the annual Doors Open Ottawa event. Begun in Europe, similar events occur in cities worldwide, including several in the United States.

The Doors Open events allow the public to tour significant buildings that are not normally widely accessible, specifically buildings with significant historical, architectural or functional value. The embassy chancery, for instance, was designed by renowned architect David Childs, now the

principle architect of One World Trade Center in New York City.

Guests arrived steadily on both days from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and were grouped into what became approximately 100 tour groups guided by more than 30 volunteers. The guides introduced the building and its collection of U.S. and Canadian art. More important, they represented the openness and hospitality of the U.S. presence in Canada.

Ambassador David Jacobson said the embassy's participation in Doors Open reflects President Barack Obama's open and transparent government initiatives.

"Opening the embassy's doors to the Ottawa community, demystifying our workplace and our work, and introducing Canadians to our U.S. and Canadian employees is our most visible outreach effort of the year," said Deputy Chief of Mission Jim Nealon.

Most visitors felt the Front Office tour was the highlight. Ambassador Jacobson spent time with each group on Saturday, giving a tour of his office and occasionally handing out mementos. The DCM was on hand the entire weekend to meet guests, answer questions and make sure everyone received a bag of the embassy's customized M&Ms. Likewise, the embassy's U.S. Marine detachment commander was present in full dress blues with a welcoming smile.

The event involved preparation by many people over several months, and called for addressing the obvious security challenges of having hundreds of strangers in the chancery. However, the experience was overwhelmingly positive for the guests and left them with a huge sense of pride about the close U.S.-Canada bond.



Minister Counselor for Public Affairs Susan Crystal, facing camera, leads a tour.

## Softball Diplomacy in Pristina

The President of the Republic of Kosovo threw out the first pitch at the Kosovo Mid-Summer Softball Classic, an embassy-sponsored event at Pristina Stadium that brought together political leaders and embassy staff for a softball tournament and barbecue.

Team members included government ministers, mayors, members of parliament and the Kosovo police.

Each of the four 18-player teams included American, Kosovo-Albanian and Kosovo-Serbian players, and each was organized around one of the four governance pillars of the Kosovo government.

"The diversity of participants and the political groupings was the best part of the game," said Member of Parliament Blerta Deliu-Kodra.

The embassy organized informal practice sessions in the weeks prior to the tournament, giving Americans a chance to loosen up and letting Kosovars learn the rules of the game. Practices were held in Pristina and at a sports

field in an ethnically Serbian community. Member of Parliament Suzan Novobrdaliu said they were fun and sociable.

On game day, Gračanica's mayor, Bojan Stojanovic, hit home run after home run. "I thought only professionals could hit a home run; I felt like I was in some movie," he said. "This was a game that I will never forget."

Member of Parliament Zenun Pajaziti spoke in appreciation of the "exchange of cultures and traditions."

The tournament's aim was to have fun while encouraging Kosovars to work together, in keeping with embassy's policy goal that "all ethnic groups in Kosovo engage with and participate in Kosovo's institutions and society," said Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Murphy. "We wanted to do something other than the usual suit-and-tie event that the diplomatic community generally hosts. We wanted to have a relaxed, summertime event that brought people together, encouraged team building and exposed our Kosovo partners to American culture. It was a big hit."

The team named the Honey Bears,



Locally Employed Staff member and third baseman Teuta Spahiu throws out a runner at first base.

representing the country's foreign affairs and security pillar, won the tournament. They beat the Batting Rams, which represented the rule of law pillar, 11–7. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Local Authority Slobodan Petrovic asked afterward: "When are we having the next game? My son wants to know as well."



# Houses and Hope Rise in the Mekong Delta

In the hot Mekong River delta of Vietnam, 25 volunteers from the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City were already sweating when they reached the end of a winding trail and found the bags of concrete and stacked bricks they would transform into a shelter for Nguyen Thi Thu and her family.

June in Vietnam is also one of the wettest months, and the volunteers got right to work, aiming to beat the next downpour.

Project sponsor Habitat for Humanity divided the 19 Locally Employed Staff and 6 Americans into two groups, one for each of the two new homes to be built.

Thu said she was glad she and her six-year-old daughter, who suffers from epilepsy, would no longer “have to worry about the roof falling down on us.”

The other new homeowner, Vo Thi Huong, said her new house would provide her daughters with a safe place to study.

At each site, volunteers painted windows, mixed cement and shoveled gravel, all in a bucolic village setting that’s just two hours by bus from one of the largest cities in Southeast Asia. Local villagers, however, lack even basic infrastructure, such as adequate housing and running water. To help, consulate staff stepped

forward, including an entry-level officer who spent months organizing the day-long Habitat for Humanity project and five entry-level officers who helped fund the project’s transportation, materials and water costs. In fact, so many volunteered for the project that Habitat for Humanity had to turn some away.

The volunteers ate a Vietnamese lunch and by late afternoon had nearly completed two sturdy structures. The LE Staff volunteers were so moved that they quickly solicited additional donations from among the volunteers to create a small fund for the families.

The volunteers “discovered they built so much more than just a home—they built hope for a family in need,” said Robin Shell, director for Habitat for Humanity in Vietnam.



Vice Consul Nicole Fox, foreground, and Locally Employed Staff member Phuong Ngo paint shutters.



# ‘Super Saturdays’ Address Visa Load

Queen’s hit song “We Are the Champions” reverberated from speakers across the nonimmigrant visa unit at the U.S. Consulate General in São Paulo, Brazil, July 23 as 18 Foreign Service officers and 46 Locally Employed Staff learned they’d broken the world record for NIV adjudications in a single day.

The 2,475 adjudications done in seven hours beat the unit’s previous record of 2,351, set in November 2010. Sao Paulo is the Department’s largest NIV-issuing post, according to Bureau of Consular Affairs data.

Demand for U.S. visas is booming in Brazil because, with the Brazilian currency approaching all-time highs against the dollar and middle-class incomes surging, more Brazilians are coming to the United States than ever. Department of Commerce data show Brazilian tourists spend more on U.S. trips than other nationalities in the region. According to the Walt Disney Company, the 4,000 or so visas issued daily by Mission Brazil create 47 U.S. jobs.

However, visa demand was outstripping Mission Brazil’s capacity to process applications. Wait times had ballooned, and NIV units throughout Brazil were working to issue more tourist visas more quickly. One initiative was “Super Saturdays.”

Officers at the four posts in Mission Brazil have worked on four Saturdays during this fiscal year. By June, the U.S. Embassy in Brasília had surpassed the total number of adjudications for all of the prior fiscal year. The U.S. Consulate General in Rio de Janeiro, meanwhile, was processing more than 150

applicants per day per officer, and the U.S. Consulate General in Recife was processing more than 500 cases a day, twice its 2009 total.

The U.S. Consulate General in São Paulo issues more than 2,000 visas per day and said it expects to increase capacity to 3,000 applicants per day by November.

During the two most recent mission-wide Super Saturdays, the four posts adjudicated 8,000 visas, generating an estimated \$40 million for the U.S. economy.



Applicants stand in line for visas at the U.S. Consulate General in São Paulo.



# STATE

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All letters become the property of *State Magazine*.

Letters will be edited for length, accuracy and clarity.

Only signed letters will be considered.

## Submissions

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## Deadlines

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## Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

While Americans of Hispanic descent trace their roots to various origins in the United States and around the world, one thing is certain: The Hispanic presence has added to America's diversity and contributed to America's economic, social and political success. Each day, the Department's Hispanic employees, as members of an increasingly diverse workforce, add value to the Department's work representing the United States and its values.

National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated between Sept. 15 and Oct. 15. It dates to 1988, when President Ronald Reagan converted President Lyndon B. Johnson's Hispanic Heritage Week into Hispanic Heritage Month. It was enacted into law on Aug. 17, 1988, in Public Law 100-402. Sept. 15, which begins the national celebration, marks the anniversary of the independence of several Latin American nations: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

Hispanic Heritage Month is a celebration of Hispanic people, culture and heritage. The 30-day period recognizes American citizens whose ancestors were from South and Central America, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba or other nations of Spanish heritage regardless of their race. It recognizes contributions made by the ancestors of Hispanic-Americans, as well as the strides made by their American descendants today.

The Department has benefited from the talent and hard work of its employees of Hispanic descent. One such individual was Joseph J. Jova. A native of New Jersey, Ambassador Jova graduated from Dartmouth College in 1938 and served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy during World War II. In 1947, following his service in the Navy, he was named the United States ambassador to Honduras and later representative to the Organization of American States and Mexico. Ambassador Jova is noted as the first Hispanic career ambassador.

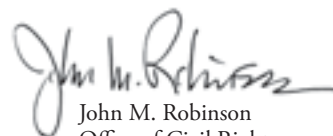
Other Hispanic professionals have followed in his footsteps, such as Maria Otero, under secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs. Under Secretary Otero oversees U.S. foreign policy on democracy, human rights, environment, oceans, trafficking in persons, population, migration and refugees. She is the highest ranking Hispanic official in the Department and the first Latina under secretary in Department history.

On a different level, Department employees have gathered to discuss issues related to Hispanic employees. One of the Department's employee affinity groups, the Hispanic Employees Council of Foreign Affairs

Agencies, led by Carmen G. Cantor, continues to raise awareness about issues related to Hispanic representation in the Department's workforce and provide professional development lectures to its members.

Recognizing the importance of diversity, the Department continues to actively recruit and employ more diverse candidates, including Hispanic-Americans. There is still work to be done, and success requires a daily effort of managers and individual employees to recognize differences and utilize them to achieve the Department's goals. Most Department decision-makers already recognize the importance of employing a workforce that reflects the rich diversity of the United States, and continually work to attract students and professionals of Hispanic heritage. However, all members of the Department family should be aware and active facilitators for a diverse workforce.

When reflecting on the meaning and importance of National Hispanic Heritage Month, we should remind ourselves that, although the celebration lasts from mid-September until mid-October, Hispanic-Americans and continual contributions made by the Hispanic-American population should be appreciated every day. As colleagues and as managers, we must ensure that the Department is a safe and welcoming place for diversity.

  
John M. Robinson  
Office of Civil Rights





Ambassador Kenneth Merten and Sister Nadige Jean-Charles of Ecole Sacré-Coeur celebrating the students' final class.

# Teaching for The Future

Embassy volunteers help Haiti recover  
By John Armiger and Ajani Husbands

Embassy employees posted overseas often volunteer in their communities, making an impact beyond the work day and helping achieve the goals in their post's Mission Strategic and Resource Plan.

At the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, the MSRP calls for "innovative diplomacy and development" to assist Haiti's recovery and reconstruction from its January 2010 earthquake. So the staff, who regularly see the aftermath of one of the worst natural disasters in the Western hemisphere, created two volunteer programs that address some of Haiti's immediate and long-term needs.

The earthquake leveled the all-girls school named Institution du Sacré-Coeur, forcing it to hold classes in temporary shelters and suspend its English Club. In January, 21 embassy employees and family members volunteered to reconstitute the English Club every Saturday for 45 girls. The club provides primary and secondary students the opportunity to learn and practice English in a fun environment.

## Important Interaction

"I wanted more interaction with Haitians outside of the embassy," said Emily Godfrey, a first-tour officer in the consular section. She said she walks away from every lesson with a "new sense of hope for Haiti."

Another volunteer wanted to continue her work as a teacher, which started years ago as a Peace Corps volunteer. "Spending two years teaching in Benin was among the most rewarding experiences of my life," said Martina Bennett, an eligible family member who works for an international nongovernmental organization. "The classroom is a great place to engage with a country's future leaders."

The club provides an interactive educational environment using games and activities to reinforce the students' schoolwork.

"Jeopardy is always a hit," said Marquis Williams, the embassy's Defense attaché.

Another volunteer has personal experience learning English as a foreign language. "I learned English as a second language and know it's more enjoyable to learn from someone other than a schoolteacher," said Alexandra Riboul, a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development. "I also wanted to contribute to these students' futures, given the importance of English in Haiti's job market."

In June, Ambassador Kenneth Merten and his family attended the English Club's last day of the semester. To celebrate the occasion, the secondary students gave presentations about what they would do if they were Haiti's ambassador to the United Nations. Ambassador Merten commended the students' hard work and called them "exceptional ambassadors for Haiti."

Community Liaison Office Coordinator Sara Butler plays with a child at the Rose Mina Orphanage. **Below:** Foreign Service National Marli Ellie teaches a reading course at the Rose Mina Orphanage.



## Second Activity

The embassy community has also organized a reading and life-skills program at the Rose Mina Orphanage. The population of the orphanage, which looks after children whose parents have died or can no longer care for them, swelled after the earthquake. The embassy community, which has traditionally played a support role to the orphanage, then rallied to coordinate a more structured volunteer effort.

Every month, 20 volunteers provide a structured learning environment for orphanage children.

“We make them feel like they are part of society,” said Kettly Jean-Baptiste, a Locally Employed Staff member in the management section.

Carla Delatour, a member of the consular section’s adoptions unit, said, “It’s important to teach them self-esteem and respect for one another.”

While one set of volunteers engage the youngest children with fun activities, another team reads Creole-language books, provided by the public affairs section, to the five- to nine-year-olds. A third set of volunteers coordinates life-skills workshops for teenagers that combine learning and interactive activities, such as water sanitation skits and crossword puzzles. Jean-Baptiste, who works with the reading group, said, “When they grow older, they will know that people cared for them and wanted the best for them.”

At the end of the day, volunteers are exhausted, but proud of the children’s accomplishments. “I was really impressed by their enthusiasm and willingness to learn,” consular section staffer Nagala Lagradelle said.

Both volunteer programs benefit from the J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust, which has awarded them \$4,000 in grants. The post also benefits: The volunteer programs offer outlets and direction for staff members’ commitment to community service. Embassy Port-au-Prince is fortunate to have dozens of energetic and passionate individuals who contribute to Haiti’s development on an individual level in the classrooms and orphanages of Port-au-Prince. ■



*The authors are vice consuls at the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince.*



# Viva El Paso

Passport agency opens on U.S.-Mexico border  
*/// By Jennifer Archibeque*

Visitors to downtown El Paso will encounter the first U.S. passport agency located along the U.S.-Mexico border. A few blocks away, pedestrians cross the Paso del Norte Bridge to Ciudad Juárez, while inside U.S. citizens apply for passport books and cards that will let them work or visit relatives across the border.

The El Paso Passport Agency's employees can relate to the customers they serve, as many of them used to make that same trek across the border to Juárez. With the exception of two adjudicators and two customer service managers, the majority of the agency's staff are Civil Service employees who adjudicated visas at the U.S. Consulate in Juárez, one of the largest immigrant-visa-processing posts in the world.

"Passport adjudicators from the consulate bring expertise in reading and interpreting Mexican documents and in-depth knowledge of the local culture," said Adjudication Manager Anna Sanchez-Perea. "We have extensive counter experience after interviewing thousands of people each day, and are adept at dealing with people at all socioeconomic levels and from different cultural norms."

Ninety percent of the staff is bilingual, including those who came to the agency from Miami, Washington, D.C., and Charleston, S.C.



Congressman Silvestre Reyes, center, who worked to secure funding for the Passport Agency in El Paso, toured the agency and met with the staff in August.



From left, Assistant Director of the El Paso Passport Agency Santiago Burciaga, Director of the El Paso Passport Agency Cynthia Haley and South Central Regional Director Jacki Harley-Bell discuss the El Paso Passport Agency's progress at an August meeting.



The El Paso agency is in the Anson Mills building.

## Varied Backgrounds

The staff also has varying backgrounds. Foreign Service Officer Cynthia Haley, the agency director, said bringing together the perspectives of the Civil Service and Foreign Service can yield positive results. “This agency’s unique combination of employees and the breadth of their knowledge and experience permit it to provide a superb level of service,” she said.

The staff, which came to the agency from other U.S. offices, was vital in getting the agency up and running because it arrived with knowledge of Passport Services and its systems. Cheryl Miller, who worked at the National Passport Center before coming to El Paso, said she shares information about how to adjudicate passports domestically, and her consulate colleagues help hone her interviewing skills and teach her about fraud trends specific to the border region.

“We agreed from day one that we would work as a team,” said Miller.

## Not Surprised

Having seen the Department’s operations from his previous position as immigrant visa chief in Ciudad Juárez, the assistant director of the El Paso Passport Agency, Santiago Burciaga, said he isn’t surprised by how his staff have come together to start the new agency off on the right foot.

“We work for a top-notch organization, whether on the foreign or domestic side,” he said.

Before the agency opened in April, local citizens who needed a passport in a hurry traveled hundreds of miles to Houston, Texas, or Tucson, Ariz.—or crossed into Mexico and applied at the U.S. Consulate in Ciudad Juárez. True to its name, El Paso is a major north-south crossing point, a perfect location for an agency serving West Texas and New Mexico.

The El Paso Passport Agency was made possible by funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. ■

*The author is customer service manager at the El Paso Passport Agency.*

## CA Completes Agencies Expansion

*By Andres Rodriguez*

Using funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Bureau of Consular Affairs and Passport Services has completed the expansion of the domestic passport network with the addition of four new agencies in addition to El Paso. The agencies are in Atlanta; Buffalo, New York; San Diego, Calif.; and St. Albans, Vt. (shown below), all areas of heavy cross-border traffic and international travel. They produce passport books and cards onsite for U.S. citizens with urgent travel plans.

The Department also opened two public counters at existing passport centers in Hot Springs, Ark., and Portsmouth, N.H. The Department operates 28 domestic facilities, including 26 passport agencies and two passport processing centers.

The Recovery Act funds “helped us bring passport services to millions of citizens around the country in areas vital to international travel and border crossing,” said Bureau of Consular Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary Brenda Sprague. “With our expansion, we were able to create jobs and enhance local economies

through our construction and daily operations.”

The expansion project provided jobs for approximately 143 government and contracted employees, who consist of locally hired personnel and transfers from other areas of the Department, CA said.

To ensure the stimulus funds were used in the communities where the agencies were built, local vendors such as architects, electricians, construction workers and others were employed during the facilities’ design and construction phases. The local economic impact of the agencies can be seen in expanded use of nearby restaurants, parking lots and retail stores providing passport photos, CA said.

Three of the new agencies occupy local historic buildings that were restored and modernized, contributing to the maintenance of healthy and vibrant downtown economies. To date, the new agencies have issued more than 130,000 passport books and passport cards.

*The author is an operations officer in the Bureau of Consular Affairs.*







The mission's disaster relief officer, Economics Officer Jason McInerney, left, discusses a scenario during Embassy San José's Crisis Management Exercise.

# Realistic Scenarios

Crisis exercises ready posts for actual troubles /// *By Tim O'Connor*

When civil unrest broke out in Tunisia in January, the U.S. Embassy in Tunis relied on its earthquake planning.

Just weeks before, in November 2010, a visiting Foreign Service Institute trainer had led the embassy staff through a crisis-management exercise with an earthquake scenario. The January unrest that toppled Tunisia's president was more of a political earthquake, but the lessons learned in November still came in handy.

"The CME was critical to the embassy's performance," said Deputy Chief of Mission Natalie E. Brown. "Most political crises develop over time, but Tunisia's political shakeup was almost instantaneous and the earthquake scenario was perfect for it. After the CME, we focused more on emergency resources and where they should be located, and individuals were also more proactive in preparing their own families for crisis situations."

In the November CME's scenario, roads were destroyed and families had to shelter in place or move in with colleagues. The civil unrest in Tunisia created similar conditions and the embassy community responded accordingly, she said.

## Broadly Required

The State Department has held crisis-management exercises at high-risk posts since 1983. But after the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the Department mandated that all posts undergo periodic CMEs. Now the eight trainers in FSI's Crisis Management Training division conduct exercises—on site or via digital videoconference—with more than 100 posts per year.

The CMEs aim to eliminate weaknesses rather than lay blame for them.

Michael Lombardo, the regional security officer at the U.S. Embassy in Djibouti,

recently completed his fifth CME. "Each time I've participated and gone through the training I've learned something new," he said. "No RSO knows everything about emergency preparedness so these exercises are a perfect way to re-familiarize personnel with the tools to respond appropriately when a crisis does occur."

The exercises are not just for security officers. They involve a post's Emergency Action Committee, which usually includes the heads of all agencies and Department sections at post, plus some local staff members. Many posts also invite outsiders, including local emergency responders, other diplomats and representatives of American businesses and international schools. RSO Mark Drobot said having included other diplomats and a representative from the American school in the November CME in Tunisia proved particularly useful when January's unrest arose. "The

strategies we discussed suddenly became more applicable than we could have ever imagined back in November,” he said.

The U.S. Embassy in San José invited Costa Rican emergency responders to join its June exercise, which also had an earthquake scenario. DCM Eric Nelson said, “The host nation participants described vividly how they would be spending the first 24 hours after a major earthquake repairing themselves in order to then help others. We were reminded that we would be in similar straits.”

Hery Ramahefason, a locally employed consular assistant at the U.S. Embassy in Madagascar, said the recent CME there gave him a new understanding of how decisions are made in a crisis. “Even though I may not be part of that committee again in a real crisis, I understand the rationale behind the decisions and I know how to efficiently implement them [and] if there is anything I think was missing in the process, by that training I know now how to suggest them,” he said. “Now I am empowered to do something to handle a crisis better.”

## Verisimilitude Pays Off

FSI trainers research and write exercises specifically for each post, coupling invented but plausible scenarios with real locations and other details. Just weeks after a February 2011 earthquake in New Zealand, Randy Berry, consul general at the U.S. Consulate General in Auckland, wrote that a recent CME there “was extremely helpful in helping us respond to the crisis in Christchurch. Having specifically used an earthquake scenario for our training, staff had an improved understanding of the most immediate needs and actions.”

That was not the only time trainers had crafted an exercise that later played out in real life. White-powder incidents, terrorist attacks, bombs and hurricanes have all occurred not long after trainers used similar scenarios at a post’s CME.



**Above:** Coast Guard Commander Troy Vest, left, chief of the Office of the Defense Representative, listens as Peace Corps Deputy Country Director Amanda Rabinowitz makes a point during the exercise. **Right:** Right, DCM Eric Nelson, left, and other participants read a scenario during Embassy San Jose’s exercise. **Below:** Stephanie Jaffe, a crisis-management trainer at FSI, discusses the Emergency Action Plan.



That’s a positive sign, said Crisis Management Training Director Jim Huskey, because CMEs help posts address weaknesses in times of calm rather than crisis.

During the 2010 CME in Auckland, the small consular staff realized it would need to serve large numbers of Americans in the event of a disaster. The consular chief made cross-training staff a priority, and when the quake hit several months later, all consular staff had completed online training.

“That made our shift to a 24/7 American Citizen Services task force a relatively smooth—and impressively efficient—transition,” Berry said.

Members of FSI’s crisis-management training staff come from the military, Foreign Service, police, Peace Corps, emergency services, education, social services and elsewhere. They collaborate to ensure that, while the scenarios are post-specific, the lessons are uniform. They focus on each post’s preparedness, planning, resources, communications and delegation of command, all of which are crucial in any type of crisis.

Mark Drobot, the RSO in Tunis for both the 2010 CME and the 2011 revolution, said CMEs pay off even when no crises occur. “The lessons are invaluable and will remain with a person throughout their career,” he said. “One day per year, every two or three years, is not too much to dedicate to crisis management.” ■

*The author is a program officer in the Crisis Management Support section of the Operations Center and worked previously in FSI’s Crisis Management Training.*





It looks like Facebook, aims to link professionals like LinkedIn and is the latest tool for Department personnel to network, communicate and collaborate online. It's Corridor, the Department's in-house professional networking site.



# CORRIDOR

## Speaks Up

New site helps employees connect /// *By Ed Warner*



From left, Corridor team members Bruce G. Burton, Dan Kottke, Tiffany Smith and Kimberly Allred discuss enhancements suggested by Corridor users.

Available for all Department personnel on OpenNet—Foreign and Civil Service, Locally Employed Staff and contractors—Corridor enables its members to publish their credentials, show their professional network, find others' expertise and experience, let others know what they're working on and form groups based on shared interests, work and perspectives.

Corridor offers a way to find others facing the same challenges. Corridor members say what project they're working on. They can also use "tags" to identify their interests, personally or professionally, such as scuba diving (30 members), public policy (20 members) and cultural affairs (47 members). Clicking on a tag shows who has that interest and lets the user connect with them. Users can also join groups large and small, such as the Digital Diplomats (135 members) or the "I Heart Consulate General Tijuana" group (15 members).

Corridor also lets members post their education and experience—its name, after all, derives from the "corridor talk" employees are said to engage in when hiring someone, deciding whether to accept a posting or comparing notes on work experiences.

## Knowledge Available

Tiffany Smith, coordinator of the Office of eDiplomacy team that operates Corridor, said Corridor fits with the Bureau of Information Resource Management's strategy of making the Department's knowledge broadly available to staff. Other examples include Diplopedia, the online source of general information on U.S. diplomacy; the Communities@State blogs; and the enterprise-wide search function.

Corridor is easy to find—it's at <http://corridor.state.gov/> and on the opening screen of the Department's Intranet page, under Information and Communication. The resemblance to Facebook is no accident, Smith said, since people already know how to use that popular Web site. "We designed the site to look somewhat like Facebook, but it functions more professionally like LinkedIn," Smith said.

Corridor has soared in popularity. In its pilot testing earlier this year, it garnered 1,300 members. It launched in May and now has more than 5,800 members. Smith said members post their resumes, language skills and, often, questions that others may be able to answer.

users were surveyed, and Smith said they indicated a strong preference for a networking site within the Department's network. On Corridor, members can say what they're working on without worrying about it becoming public—but the site is not for socializing, at least in the main. "It's not social networking; it's professional networking," Smith said.

Now, all of this may sound like a great way for an employee to build a professional network or get his or her skills noticed—for personal advancement. But Smith said Corridor's developers hope it will become a tool for collaboration as well as getting ahead. "We want Corridor to make the expertise and experience of State personnel available more widely to colleagues throughout the Department," said Bruce Burton, senior advisor in the Office of eDiplomacy. "And if the connections and contributions you make on Corridor serve you well in your career, that's great, too." ■

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*The author is acting editor of State Magazine.*

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Old Tallinn, as seen from the former KGB office in the Viru Hotel, basks in the sun.

# Celebrating Freedom

Sept. 6 marked the 20th anniversary of the re-establishment of full U.S. diplomatic relations with the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. However, celebrations have occurred throughout 2011.

A highlight was Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's participation in a July ceremony with the foreign ministers of the three Baltic countries in Vilnius, Lithuania. During her visit to the Community of Democracies ministerial conference, Secretary Clinton honored the struggle and resilience of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian peoples by laying a wreath with her Baltic counterparts at the Lithuanian Parliament building.

Lithuania was the first of the Baltic states to declare independence, in March 1990, followed by Latvia and Estonia in August 1991. Although Soviet forces pushed

back—taking control of the Vilnius TV tower and attempting to take over the Lithuanian Parliament, the Baltic states' desire for freedom proved too strong to crush. On Sept. 7, 1991, the ruling council of the Soviet Union recognized the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania after 47 years of occupation.

The United States never recognized the Soviet occupation, and the Baltic states have been strong U.S. allies since regaining their independence. The close relationship means that 2011 is a year to be celebrated.

In Tallinn, Estonia, the U.S. Embassy has planned several events aimed at highlighting the strong bilateral relationship. These include the screening of a video message from Secretary Clinton on a large public screen at the Song Festival Grounds, Lauluväljak, during

a concert marking the twentieth anniversary of the restoration of Estonian independence. Poster displays at a popular shopping mall near the embassy will offer a retrospective of American and Estonian diplomatic engagement over the past 20 years. On Oct. 2, the date when the United States Mission in Tallinn opened its doors, the embassy will host a reception at the Palace Hotel in the same quarters where Ambassador Robert C. Frasure began the process of re-establishing the American presence in Tallinn.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Riga will dedicate a new embassy compound and invite former U.S. ambassadors to Latvia and Latvian ambassadors to the United States. There will also be a Twitter contest open only to 20-year-olds, a 20th-anniversary celebration of the Fulbright Program and a traveling poster

Posts mark 20th anniversary of restored relations /// *By Irina Karmanova and Victoria Orero*



U.S. Marines unfold the American flag as embassy staff watch in the background.



**Left:** President Barack Obama meets with Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė. **Above:** Ints M. Silins, the first U.S. ambassador to Latvia after the restoration of its independence, makes a point to Andrius Lapiš, left, the longest-tenure employee at post, and U.S. Ambassador to Latvia Judith G. Garber. **Below:** Then Vice President Dan Quayle, second from left, joins Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius and U.S. Ambassador Darryl Johnson to cut the ribbon opening the U.S. Embassy in Vilnius in February 1992.



and video show about the history of U.S.-Latvian diplomatic relations. Earlier this year, the city of Riga witnessed to a fly-over by the Thunderbirds of the U.S. Air Force.

The U.S. Embassy in Vilnius, Lithuania, created a permanent exhibition of documents and photographs illustrating 20 years of strong U.S.-Lithuania ties, a gift to the people of Lithuania from the United States. The exhibit was symbolically presented during the post's 4th of July party and will be formally opened in Vilnius this fall by Ambassador Anne E. Derse and Lithuania's foreign minister. It will then travel throughout Lithuania, where hosting municipalities will hold concurrent commemorative events.

Today, the Baltic capitals are the capitals of independent countries that are contributing members of the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization and are working hard to share lessons learned from their successful transition to democracy with their neighbors. The United States is proud to be celebrating the 20th anniversary of renewed diplomatic relations with these great allies. ■

*The authors were interns in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.*

## Estonia—Before and After

*By Dmitri Tarakhovsky*

In the summer of 1972, I first saw Tallinn when it was still the capital of Soviet Estonia. It fascinated and charmed me with its medieval architecture, the cleanliness of its streets and stores, the coziness of its restaurants and cafes, and the reserved but attentive service everywhere.

It didn't feel Soviet.

For most Soviet citizens, the Baltic states were as far "West" as they were allowed to go, and thus they became the destination for honeymooners, army retirees, journalists seeking respite from Moscow's oversight and anyone trying to escape Soviet reality for a few days. The newly built hotel Viru, where my family and I stayed, was a 23-story marvel of contemporary architecture—the best hotel in the USSR. It was constructed by the Finns with amenities such as bars, saunas and a discotheque, features common in Western hotels but extravagantly decadent to the few Soviet citizens lucky enough to stay there.

Little did we know that the hotel's 23rd floor housed an amenity of a different sort—a KGB office that monitored everybody and everything in the building. The KGB departed in 1991, and the much-feared place was forgotten until Estonia turned it into a museum for remembrance this year. It feels almost surreal that only 20 years ago the Soviet regime reigned supreme over people's lives, preventing them from traveling abroad, watching foreign TV, reading the foreign press or communicating with foreigners. Now, Estonia evokes a feel of freedom while old Tallinn continues to charm and fascinate its visitors.

*The author is a public diplomacy desk officer in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.*



# On the Frontier

DS keeps watch in Northern Afghanistan /// *By Kevin Casey*

In Afghanistan's Helmand Province, 30 Marines in armored vehicles might be necessary to escort two chief of mission personnel visiting a road project. Up north on Afghanistan's border with Uzbekistan, those same personnel—with an armored vehicle, the proper communications equipment and other gear— might grab the keys and drive themselves.

What is safe today may not be safe tomorrow, so Greg Hays, senior regional security officer at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, has stationed two Bureau of Diplomatic Security special agents at the U.S. Consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif, currently under construction in Balkh Province. They work with Regional Command-North to keep their fingers on the pulse of the threat in the area and adjust security guidelines accordingly.

“While the base commander and military elements have force-protection responsibility for chief of mission personnel in Mazar, we have ultimate responsibility for them,” Hays said. “We look at the threat analysis back here, but that is on paper. We’ve really got to have RSOs out there to talk to the guys on the ground and see it with our own eyes.”

The first DS special agents on the ground were RSO Mike Megeath and Assistant RSO Aram Keosaian.

## Avoid Highway 1

Shortly after he arrived in the summer of 2010, Keosaian recommended to Embassy Kabul's Emergency Action Committee that chief of mission personnel in RC-North no longer use Highway 1, the local section of the ring road around Afghanistan. His recommendation followed a tragic incident in which three non-DS security contractors were killed in a complex assault while on the highway.

Highway 1 is the only ground route west of Mazar-e-Sharif, and restricting it was not a popular decision. “There is always a threat out there, but at some point you’ve got to differentiate,” Keosaian said. “These things start adding up: Not only is there a lot of activity in this area, but they’re also specifically targeting civilians, and they’re specifically targeting the main roadway our people are frequenting. You’ve got to take all of those factors together and make your best judgment call. I recommended to the EAC that the road be put off limits.”

The more than 40 chief of mission personnel in the area include subject-matter experts from the departments of State and Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development. These experts are distributing seeds and fertilizer to farmers, overseeing construction of bridges and irrigation projects and advising local leaders on governance and rule of law.

Mike Megeath, on horseback, meets local residents gathered for a weekend game of *Buzkashi* in Mazar-e-Sharif.



“We want these people able to get out and do their jobs, but they have to do it safely,” Keosaian said.

The special agents work with RSO Kabul and a variety of sources to review threat information. They also rely on their Foreign Service National investigators, who Megeath said “are very good, very well connected.

“They attend local meetings and are dialed into the Afghan National Police,” he said. “They get up-to-date, credible information right away, and that’s a big help.”

## Local Connections

The agents have their own local connections, as well. “Our success up here is based primarily on personal relationships,” Keosaian said. “If there is something going on, if there’s a threat, there are five different people who are going to call me and tell me about it.”

Five Afghan National Police officers help secure the consulate’s construction site, and the two DS agents have gone out of their way to create a strong bond with them. One day, there was an active car-bomb threat in the city, and the ANP outside the gate were rightly concerned that they could be the target. Keosaian called up a U.S. Army colonel with 10th Mountain Division troops in the area. “I drove my car over there, the colonel came out, and we picked up a bunch of HESCOs and put them in the back of my car,” Keosaian said.



Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan, as seen from the roof of a new U.S. consulate under construction there.

DS Special Agents Aram Keosaian, left, and Mike Megeath finish their site security tour of the former hotel being renovated to create a U.S. consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif. Right: DS agents meet with security contractors inside the gate of the U.S. consulate construction site in Mazar-e-Sharif in November 2010.



HESCOs are collapsible rectangular containers made of steel webbing lined with a water-permeable canvas. They can be filled with earth to form an inexpensive but effective security barrier.

Megeath and Keosaian assembled the HESCOs around the ANP guard shack. They then paid \$50 of their own money to have a local cart driver bring dirt from a nearby pile, and two construction workers helped fill the HESCOs with the dirt. The barrier made the ANP officers feel safer while standing guard.

“You can’t rely on things to be handed to you up here,” Keosaian said. “You’ve got to make things happen, even if they are not part of your traditional responsibilities.”

For Keosaian, it was a reminder that networking is essential. “You’re not just going to show up on a military base and expect them to gas up your car or give you a bunch of HESCOs,” he said.

Having completed his tour in August 2011, Megeath recommends assignments on Afghanistan’s frontier: “We see kids going to school, people on the streets; the local population is friendly [and] you get a sense of what people really think.” ■

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*The author is a writer in the DS Office of Public Affairs.*





Ambassador Thorne cuts the ribbon at the Forum's opening.

# Recipe for Success

Tri-Mission Rome, which encompasses the U.S. embassies in Rome and the Holy See and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, recently celebrated the creation of an alliance called the Forum that combines in one location the services of the community liaison office, Global Employment Initiative and the mission's Customer Service Center.

Attending the ribbon-cutting that opened the Forum were Ambassador to Italy David Thorne, Ambassador to the Holy See Miguel Diaz and representatives from the U.S. Mission to the U.N.

Creation of the alliance had been held back by a lack of resources and inadequate space within the embassy, but the organizers say they were able to establish the Forum using existing resources and without additional cost to the Tri-Mission.

The CLO, which has been lauded for the social events it organizes and hosts, can now use the new central location to help arriving employees and families accomplish the tasks that let them navigate their new environment, such as understanding school options and reviewing upcoming activities. The GEI office helps adult family members find jobs outside the Tri-Mission and the Customer Service Center says it aims to provide quality service with a human touch.

## One-Stop Center

The CSC offers a one-stop approach to such functions as the Tri-Mission's employee check-in and check-out processes. For check-ins, CSC staff members take diplomatic identification photos and begin

the accreditation process for the issuance of the primary Italian identification card for government employees. The CSC also helps eliminate much of the check-in and check-out paperwork, and having its staff in one location reduces the need for employees to visit multiple offices.

Tasks the CSC can help with include translating American drivers' licenses and applying for the document needed to execute any financial transaction in Italy. The office makes the document available even before the employee's arrival, so employees can get a jump start on signing fiscal contracts.

The CSC also helps with such domestic issues as finding a veterinarian, opening a bank account, investigating Italian language programs and other services vital to

Tri-Mission consolidates services in one center /// *By Arianna Caselli and Jonathan Brent Salter*





newcomers' adjustment at post. It can also help new employees navigate the often-confusing process of acquiring a cell phone, subscribing to a data plan or gaining home Internet and cable services. The center is producing tutorial videos on necessary elements of life in Rome such as grocery shopping, buying public transportation tickets and paying fines and legal fees at the post office.

When embassy employees return to the United States or move to a new post, the CSC is equally helpful, doing everything from providing help and information on canceling home services to collecting government electronic equipment and acquiring electronic signatures when check-out tasks are completed. The CSC reminds departing employees of their check-out responsibilities 90 days before departure, to provide ample time to arrange their affairs, and provides guidance and support to make employees' departure as stress-free as possible.

**Top:** Many children use the children's corner while their parents visit offices in the Forum. **Center:** The lending library, next to the lounge, is where embassy staff can donate or check out books, magazines and movies. **Bottom:** Members of the CSC staff include, from left, intern Jonathan Salter, Director Patrizia Puccio, intern Arianna Caselli and CSC Representatives Julie Maldonado and Massimo Capuzzi.

## Welcoming Environment

The Forum's welcoming environment for arriving employees and families includes a customer-friendly lounge, to help them feel at home, and a children's lounge equipped with children's books, toys and games, so children will be occupied while their parents complete the check-in process. There's also a reading area surrounded by bookcases, where adults can sit on the couches while reading a magazine or watching RomeNet's 24-hour information broadcast, and a computer center next to the lounge that provides Internet access, printing and photocopying services.

CSC staff has always provided light refreshments for visiting clients, and now the embassy community is returning the favor by regularly bringing treats to share with the CSC and its customers.

The Forum sends a message of how seriously the Tri-Mission values strong customer service. The synergy and coordination among its offices delivers quality services in an efficient and timely manner. The Forum's organizers hope it will become a model for other missions—visitors' frequent statements of appreciation and praise indicate the Forum is a recipe for success. ■

*The authors work in the Customer Service Center at Tri-Mission Rome.*





## ***Post of the Month***

In 2006, Brazzaville commemorated its namesake, French explorer Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, with a memorial featuring a mausoleum, museum, sculpture garden and 20-foot statue.





# Brazzaville

New embassy signals U.S. support for Congo's rebirth

*By DeMark Schulze and Morgan J. O'Brien*



Embassy Brazzaville boasts a local guard force that is always game to compete with the embassy staff in soccer, basketball and five-kilometer races.



Brazzaville. It's an exotic name for a vibrant capital on the banks of the Congo River that once served as the capital for all French Equatorial Africa, which comprised the present-day Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic.

The city also served as Free France's symbolic seat of government from 1940 to 1943. General Charles de Gaulle's office overlooked the rapids that separate Congo-Brazzaville from its neighbor, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and its capital, Kinshasa. Together, Brazzaville and Kinshasa provide a piece of geographic trivia: they are the only national capitals located within sight of one another.

Few seem aware of Brazzaville's tenure as France's wartime capital in exile despite the fact that the film *Casablanca* mentions the city in one of cinema history's most memorable moments. As the movie concludes, Rick Blaine, played by Humphrey Bogart, contemplates joining the Free French in Brazzaville before uttering the famous line, "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

Today Brazzaville embodies the ideals of friendship and beauty, words that aptly describe an often overlooked city whose charming citizens warmly welcome visitors and showcase the Congo's artistic soul.

### Rich History

Congo was settled by Bantu tribes who established one of the great kingdoms in Central Africa and became part of the French colonial system after explorer Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza arrived in the 1880s. De Brazza duelled over the rights to the area with Belgian explorers, leading to the development of two separate colonies straddling both sides of the Congo River.

Both countries became known as sources of extractive resource wealth. Today, Congo-Brazzaville is working to diversify its economy. While oil still accounts for 80 percent of Congo's gross domestic product, the country also boasts a robust timber industry and promising iron ore deposits. Congo, with some of the largest expanses of unexploited forests and savannah in the world, is home to thousands of exotic species, including gorillas, chimpanzees, grey parrots, forest elephants and leopards.

The Congolese people are, of course, Congo's most valuable resource. They pride themselves on being the lone African state to resolve a civil conflict without Western influence. Congolese writers and artists have achieved renown through their work, much of which was inspired by the struggle against colonialism. Though artists suffered during a

Marxist-Leninist period of post-colonial rule, Congo has again become home to a robust artistic community, thanks in large part to the acclaimed Poto-Poto School of painting.

The art scene extends beyond the canvas and written word into the wardrobes of Congolese men and women. The bright colors of tropical flowers and wildlife, from turquoise to tangerine, that distinguish the Poto-Poto School, also show up in the costumes of Brazzaville's renowned dandies known as sapeurs.

Dressed in their flashy designer garb, the sapeurs of Congo represent La Sape, the *Société des Ambianceurs et Personnes Elegantes* (roughly translated as the society of good-timers and elegant people). Started by Congolese military veterans and students who returned from Paris with a colorful and unique twist on European style, Congo's Sapologie movement represents a philosophy extending beyond clothing to promoting moral nobility and peace—refreshing undertones for a country that is no stranger to the tragedies of civil conflict.

### Renewed Ties

After a 1997 evacuation during Congo's second civil war, a greatly reduced U.S. Embassy in Brazzaville worked out of an office

As the first State Department building to earn LEED gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, Brazzaville's new embassy is dressed up with July 4th bunting.



**Left:** During a visit by former National Basketball Association and Women's National Basketball Association players to Congo as part of the Sports United program, embassy personnel, including Community Liaison Officer Caroline Ferrari, cleaned up and painted a local orphanage. Here she shows off her camerawork to some of her new friends.

**Above:** Located on the Atlantic coast about 300 miles from Brazzaville, Pointe Noire has beautiful beaches and serves as Congo's financial hub.





Generations of military veterans and students returned to Congo with a unique twist on European style. Holding court at a local establishment every Sunday evening, the *sapeurs* of Brazzaville embrace the vibrant colors of Congo's artistic soul.



**Above:** Just prior to their travel to Haiti as part of a two-week mission in support of earthquake relief efforts, U.S. Embassy in Brazzaville local staff members Tresor Mabiala, Yvon Bitsindou and Brice Boukedi show off the t-shirts they plan to wear.

**Right:** Embassy Brazzaville's well-trained local guards donned parade uniforms for the embassy's July 4th celebration. **Far right:** Sid the gorilla is a star attraction at the Lesio-Louna Gorilla Reserve, run by the Project for the Protection of Gorillas. Sid is an orphan who has grown up as part of a program focusing on the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable primate species.



PHOTOGRAPHS: U.S. EMBASSY IN BRAZZAVILLE





**Left:** In Embassy Brazzaville's Information Resource Center, Ambassador Christopher W. Murray greets Fulbright scholarship recipients prior to their departure to the United States. **Below:** The dueling skylines of Brazzaville and Kinshasa, separated by the Congo River, represent the only location in the world where two national capitals sit within sight of each other.



in Kinshasa until American diplomats were again permanently posted here in 2005.

A new embassy compound situated along Brazzaville's main boulevard opened in 2009. The state-of-the-art embassy became the first Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations structure to win Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The compound highlights America's commitment to Congo's rebirth and a renewed focus on U.S. programming efforts.

Twelve direct-hire Americans and nearly 200 local staff constitute the U.S. mission. Most U.S. personnel are on their first or second tours, with duties that entail significant reporting, program and management roles. Officers interested in emerging economies, climate change and biodiversity will find Brazzaville especially rewarding. The Republic of the Congo is an important U.S. partner for regional security, the environment, conservation and medical research.

Aside from the State Department, the only other U.S. agency present in Brazzaville is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Thus, many of Brazzaville's staff serve as liaisons for other agencies such as the Department of Defense's Africa Command and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The embassy's proximity to Kinshasa, a seven-minute ride in one of the embassy's boats, provides staff in both cities the opportunity to work and train "across the river."

## Hardship and Comfort

Life in Brazzaville is not without challenges. Hardships include limited commercial flights,

unreliable Internet access, poor infrastructure and a lack of amenities and conveniences that meet U.S. standards. However, most embassy personnel learn to embrace Congo's quirks.

Brazzaville is a quiet, safe city, and embassy staff are housed in comfortable homes that are within 10 minutes of the embassy or any other place in the city, including the airport. Colleagues often get together for a morning round on Brazzaville's nine-hole golf course or a game of tennis at the local club; others enjoy the vibrant local music scene or viewing the sapeurs holding court at their weekly expositions. There are also opportunities for weekend expeditions in Congo's national parks.

In 2009, the Department designated Brazzaville a fully accompanied post. Children find their niche at the tennis club playground or the post's recreational facility, Villa Washington, which is also the scene for a weekly English-language lecture series.

Brazzaville remains a well-kept secret, perhaps due to the fact that the planned sequel to *Casablanca*, titled *Brazzaville*, never materialized, undoubtedly costing the Congolese capital a measure of pop culture notoriety. While we'll never know if Rick Blaine made it to the Free French capital, the United States has renewed its presence in this intriguing nation in the heart of central Africa, opening the door to, as Bogart would say, a beautiful friendship. ■

*DeMark Schulze is a political-economic officer and Morgan O'Brien is a vice consul at the embassy. Embassy Brazzaville alumni Christopher McHone and Breton Boudreaux also contributed to this article.*

## At a Glance >>>

## Republic of the Congo



**Capital:** Brazzaville

**Government type:** Republic

**Area:** 342,000 sq. km.

**Comparative area:** Slightly smaller than Montana

**Population:** 3.8 million

**Official languages:** French, Lingala, Monokutuba and other Bantu languages

**GDP - per capita:** \$3,165

**Currency (code):** Central African Franc (XAF)

**Export commodities:** Petroleum products, lumber, plywood, potash and iron ore

**Export partners:** China, Australia and France

**Import commodities:** Capital/construction/agricultural/medical equipment and materials, foodstuffs

**Import partners:** France, Belgium and China

**Internet country code:** .cg

Source: Country Background Notes



# On-site Service

Consular section expands outreach at Army base /// *By Rebekah Ahrens and Will Yu*

At Yongsan Garrison Army Base, headquarters of U.S. Forces-Korea, a steady trickle of people arrive in the lobby of the Army Community Services building and receive services from the consular staff of the U.S. Embassy in Seoul.

For a year now, consular section staff have spent five hours on one day each week providing consular services on the base to serve U.S. service members. The most frequently requested services involve passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, notarials, Social Security services and immigration questions.

For the more than 28,000 U.S. military personnel who work and live on one of the 77 installations throughout the Korean peninsula, the consular section's position is: "We will come to you." This is crucial because

packing up a family, locating and driving to the embassy in downtown Seoul and finding parking can be discouraging.

## Stress Reducer

The outreach in Seoul, done in coordination with the U.S. Forces-Korea Legal Services Office, reduces the stress associated with gaining needed paperwork and facilitates professional and personal interactions between staff of the departments of Defense and State.

Not long after arriving in Seoul, Consul General Cynthia Sharpe noticed how frequently military personnel traveled to the embassy for assistance. She also understood Defense Department culture, having come from an Air Force family. The consular section in April 2010 launched the outreach,

equipping the office with the necessary tools, forms and furnishings of a functioning American Citizens Services office. Now, the office provides ACS without the usual logistical challenges facing mobile consular outreach services.

The office has grown from assisting an average of 20 clients on its day of weekly operation to more than 90. To promote the office, the U.S. Embassy in Seoul worked with U.S. Forces radio, newspapers and TV. An embassy consular officer is now a regular speaker at the Army's mandatory newcomers' briefing.

## Positive Impressions

Consular section employees say a key value of the outreach is the positive impressions they

Consular Officer L. Elizabeth Rudisill takes information from an American soldier regarding his application for a new passport.





**Above:** DOD personnel are checked in at the base's office to receive American Citizens' Services. **Right:** Meeting at the base are from left Ambassador Kathleen Stephens, Lieutenant General Joseph F. Fil Jr. and Consul General Cynthia C. Sharpe.

leave behind as they tailor services to the needs of clients. The embassy presence is especially appreciated by young parents who no longer have to face the challenge of an off-base, downtown trip with a newborn to document the baby's birth. Others come to the office to talk to a consular officer about everything from immigration to federal elections.

Since Yongsan is the U.S. Forces–Korea Headquarters' hub, military personnel can hop on a free bus to the base from any other base in Korea. The embassy presence there is especially useful for those not familiar with or simply overwhelmed by Seoul, a city of 12 million people.

While the U.S. Army has passport agents who handle routine applications, Army Passport Agent Staff Sergeant Mark Cansler said Embassy Seoul's outreach is a lifeline that has become "the backbone of our own operations." The embassy backstop's the Army's agents and handles complex cases that would previously have been referred to the embassy downtown.

In fiscal year 2010, Seoul ranked first among U.S. posts worldwide for notaries and second for passport services. The outreach at the base, plus the embassy's new appointment system, mean there is rarely a



wait time of more than 2–3 minutes before a client receives assistance at either location.

On a recent day at Yongsan Garrison, Victoria Baker came to the consular office dressed in her military fatigues and ready to report for work. "I'm just here to get a tourist passport," she said. "It's easier to get here than the embassy."

Shortly afterward, a family with five children arrived, and in less than ten minutes they were happily on their way. The father

thanked the consular staff, saying, "I know the embassy downtown is an option, but it's so much more difficult. This is great."

The lines of customers fell off as the outreach day ended, and Embassy Seoul consular staff went home satisfied they helped make consular services to Department of Defense colleagues a bit more accessible. ■

*The authors are vice consuls at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul.*



***Office of the Month***



# Children's Issues

Office deals with abduction, adoption

*/// By Carmella Donahue and Donna Wiss*







Staff members of the Adoption Division discuss staffing and policy issues.

When Foreign Service officer Beth Payne arrived in Washington, D.C., in July to start a second rotation in the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of Children's Issues, it wasn't the same office she had left eight years earlier. Walking into her first staff meeting as the office's new director, she burst into an ear-to-ear grin and exclaimed "Wow!" The conference room was packed: What began as a four-person office in 1994 now has a staff of nearly 100. Four divisions and eight branches cover a range of functions, including policy, diplomacy, prevention, case management, training, outreach and interagency collaboration.

To provide more focused assistance to parents whose children had been abducted internationally, CA established the Office of Children's Issues in 1994 as an offshoot of American Citizens Services. Later, the office took on responsibility for policy and coordination for inter-country adoptions. The two teams provide guidance and leadership on consular aspects of children's services and fulfill U.S. treaty obligations relating to children. This includes serving as the U.S. Central Authority to the 1980 Hague

Abduction Convention and the 1993 Hague Adoption Convention.

## Abduction Division

The Abduction Division in the office handles the largest child abduction caseload of any country in the world, with more than 60 full-time officers and case assistants who guide parents through every step of the process. The officers gain country expertise and establish strong relationships with desk officers, overseas posts, law enforcement personnel, legal advisors and the foreign central authorities, all in order to coordinate the return of or access to abducted children. In that role, the office carries out the provisions of the Hague Abduction Convention and works to strengthen and expand the convention beyond the current 68 U.S. partner countries.

CI's prevention team talks to parents about the importance of a custody decree, passport issuance and other prevention measures. With the Passport Office, CI uses the Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program to enforce the law requiring two parents' consent for those under the age of 18

to gain a passport, a key tool for preventing international parental child abduction.

When an abduction occurs—either of children abducted from the United States or abducted to the United States from abroad—CI country officers respond. The inward and outward flow of abductions occurs most often with Mexico and Canada, but also with other countries.

## Adoption Division

The Adoption Division, staffed by more than 20 full-time employees, formulates and coordinates policy and provides direction to posts on inter-country adoption policy. In fiscal year 2010, Americans adopted more than 11,000 children from 120 countries, mainly China, Ethiopia, Russia and South Korea. CI's focus is combating fraud, ensuring adoptions

## Office of the Month



serve the best interests of children and protecting adopting parents from adopting stolen children. The job is complex because of the many cultures, legal systems and opportunities for adoption to be exploited.

CI's adoption officers focus on educating the domestic adoption community and foreign counterparts and engaging in adoption policy coordination within the U.S. government. They interact daily with adoption service providers, prospective adoptive parents, congressional offices and the Department's geographic bureaus to promote safe and transparent adoptions worldwide.



**Left:** Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov greet the media at the signing of a U.S.-Russian adoption agreement in July. **Below:** Ambassador Susan Jacobs, front center, meets with members of the Brazil Hague Central Authority in May.







**Above:** CI promotes work-life balance, as shown by the several parents of young children who work there. **Right:** Chin Kuan is one of seven country officers serving Mexico in the Outgoing Abduction Division.



CI also provides day-to-day oversight of convention compliance and monitoring the accreditation of U.S. adoption service providers. Under the convention, adoption service providers must meet federal standards of ethical and transparent behavior. This, and increased domestic awareness of the convention's stronger safeguards and growing international support for the convention, ensures that CI officers can focus on helping posts engage with host nations to promote improved adoption systems. Eighty-two nations are party to the convention, and four are signatories. Many others are moving toward implementing the convention safeguards.

CI benefits from extensive coordination with the Visa Office, Fraud Prevention Programs, U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, the departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, state authorities and foreign adoption authorities. These interactions help ensure a total U.S. government approach to adoptions to and from the United States and protect all parties involved.



PHOTOGRAPHS: CARVELLA DONAHUE (ABOVE); ISIS MORAN

Due to the expanding scope of its work, CI established the Outreach Branch to spread information about CI's mission. The branch works with adoptions and abductions staff, helps ensure public awareness and trains consular and Department staff.

In May, the branch worked with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Department of Justice and overseas posts on a month of activities marking National Missing Children's Day. The Department's commemoration culminated with a videotaped message by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton that was posted on U.S. mission Web sites worldwide and broadcast via social media. In November, CI will highlight National Adoption Month by hosting events on inter-country adoption.

### Cohesive Team

CI's ability to interact with many stakeholders may stem from the nature of its staff. Mike Goldschmidt, a retired Foreign Service officer working on "When Actually Employed" status in CI, said the work attracts a certain personality.

"It's a kind of work that brings people together," he said. "People find it rewarding here." Goldschmidt said he likes the camaraderie and the fact that no two cases are exactly alike. "You never stop learning."

CI's staff is as diverse as its clients, and this facilitates understanding and communication with parents and authorities throughout the world. Afua Owusu-Baafi joined CI's staff in 2009 as a part of the Student Temporary Employment Program. Now an Abductions country officer, she said the casework is challenging but enjoyable.

"I've learned so much since I've arrived," she said. "It's a great mix of Civil Service, Foreign Service and case assistants that make our team successful."

Kathy Unlu, a Presidential Management Fellow in CI's Adoption Division, said she likes the healthy work/life balance. "As a mother of a one-year-old, I value CA's message: that the children and families we serve, as well as our own at home, are important," she said.

### Special Advisor

In July 2010, Secretary Clinton appointed Susan S. Jacobs as special advisor for Children's Issues. A career FSO who held previous positions in Papua New Guinea, El Salvador,

Venezuela and Romania, Ambassador Jacobs said she has embraced the challenge of engaging foreign government officials to protect the welfare and interests of children.

Since her appointment, Jacobs has traveled to Japan, Korea, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Brazil, Kyrgyzstan and other key countries to lead high-level talks on international parental child abduction and inter-country adoption. The special advisor assists with many aspects of outreach, training and policy formation.

Jacobs said supporting and promoting the Hague Convention is a key part of her efforts and that the most rewarding aspect of her job is "when a child who is illegally abducted abroad is returned" or "when a country makes advancements in its child welfare programs and makes adoptions open and transparent."

"It's the little successes...one child at a time," she said. ■

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*Carmella Donahue is a branch chief and Donna Wiss is an abductions officer in the Office of Children's Issues.*

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CI staff members, from left, Clifton Oliphant, Dan Slusher and Lindsay Henderson review a redesign led by CI's Outreach Branch for the travel.state.gov Web site.







# Overseas Care

**FS health practitioners fit the bill** /// *By Fritz Fuller*

When facing common medical ailments such as diarrhea, members of the Foreign Service often visit their embassy health unit. The medical provider will often be a Foreign Service health practitioner. What exactly is an FSHP, they may wonder, and what does he or she know about what ails me?

An FSHP is a U.S.-licensed physician assistant or family nurse practitioner who has extensive clinical training in the diagnosis and management of common medical conditions, including chronic illnesses and acute disorders. Graduates of PA and NP programs have the expertise to examine patients, order and interpret diagnostic tests, and prescribe treatments and medications.

In their training, NPs and PAs participate in comprehensive clinical rotations and receive two to three years of intensive education and training. Most programs are at the master's degree level, and PA programs commonly offer specialty education in the surgical, medical and pediatric disciplines. The Office of Medical Services requires PAs and NPs to have extensive post-graduate primary care experience.

FSHPs provide a broad range of health care services, many similar to those available from primary care physicians. Their main focus is routine and emergency patient care. They are typically on call 24 hours a day. FSHPs also manage such aspects of the health unit as budgeting, logistics and personnel; evaluate local medical providers and facilities; and conduct training in first aid, CPR and trauma for mission employees. FSHPs often serve on committees at posts, including those for family advocacy and emergency action planning.

Although the hallmark of PAs and NPs is autonomy in medical decision-making, they know when to consult a physician or specialist. FSHPs, regional medical officers and regional medical officer/psychiatrists work in a complementary manner to provide patient care. This

close collaboration is especially important in the resource-limited overseas environment.

Although the practice of PAs and NPs is similar, there are differences in their educational backgrounds, educational philosophies, ability to practice independently—NPs in some states can work without a supervising physician—and areas they work in. (Most NPs focus on primary care; PAs tend to specialize.)

The Department's first FSHPs, initially all NPs, were brought into MED in the early 1980s. Since then, their numbers have grown rapidly to more than 100 providers. Every prospective FSHP goes through a highly competitive hiring process that includes a thorough check of credentials and references as well as a demanding personal interview and assessment of clinical expertise. The minimal entry requirements call for four years of direct patient care experience serving all ages, preferably in a challenging setting such as a remote, rural or military environment. The vast majority of FSHPs far exceed this minimum; the last group of incoming FSHPs averaged more than 15 years of clinical experience.

FSHPs are Foreign Service specialists. The Department's approximately 70 NPs and 35 PAs work in conjunction with the RMOs and RMO/Ps. About 90 serve overseas, the vast majority at high-hardship-differential posts. The rest fill key positions at MED in Washington, D.C., in such areas as medical clearances, medical evacuations, health promotion, mental health and continuing medical education.

The next time you need medical attention, you can rest assured that the Department's FSHPs and the rest of its medical team are there for you and your family. ■

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*The author is the Foreign Service health practitioner in Vientiane, Laos.*



# FSI Adds to Array of Distance Learning Courses

Have a yen to learn a new skill, but are too far away or don't have enough time to come to the Foreign Service Institute? With a growing range of distance learning courses, FSI will come to you.

The institute now has thousands of such courses from which to choose. Some 2,000 commercially purchased products are available to eligible employees and their family members. In addition, FSI has about 200 custom-designed courses and is creating more each day. The result is a growing curriculum tailored to the needs of a diverse and geographically dispersed workforce. With 24/7 worldwide access via our Internet-based LearnCenter, you can increase your on-the-job skills and prepare yourself for your next assignment.

Many employees first become acquainted with FSI's distance learning offerings via language training. The School of Language Studies offers 63 mentor-guided courses in

17 languages, including "express" courses in Arabic, Haitian Creole and Urdu, plus courses in Chinese and Russian reading maintenance and Spanish consular tradecraft. Most courses run 14 weeks.

Students have the opportunity to speak with their mentor (a language and culture instructor at FSI who is a native speaker of the target language) for 30 to 45 minutes each week by phone to perfect their pronunciation and speaking skills. Mentors tailor lessons to each student's skill level, making sessions enjoyable and productive.

Reading-maintenance and listening-comprehension students participate in a mentor-monitored online forum, discussing audio segments and articles that are part of their course. All mentor-guided courses are now available on the Internet via the FSI LearnCenter, and nearly half of the courses also include access to the Distance Language Learning SharePoint Portal. Students can view their mentor's "homeroom"

page customized for their course and download non-FSI language materials that are compatible with mobile devices such as tablets and smart-phones. SharePoint sites provide students and mentors with a platform for document sharing, discussion boards and scheduling functions in one spot. Eventually, all SLS distance learning courses will have SharePoint sites.

Students taking the Dari and Pashto express courses or Spanish consular tradecraft course can access FSI-created supplementary materials via their smartphones. This is helpful for brush-ups during breaks from work and car trips.

In mid-July, FSI launched a new Civil Service Performance Management and Evaluation Distance Learning course. The course walks Civil Service employees and their supervisors through all regulations and procedures needed to complete performance appraisals and manage performance, including producing performance requirements, evaluations, counseling and performance plans for underperformers.

New courses on management and evaluation of Foreign Service officers and Locally Employed Staff will be introduced this autumn. These and all newly designed FSI courses will be available for PC- and Macintosh-based platforms.

Distance Learning is also being used to increase interagency understanding and coordination, in fulfillment of Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review objectives. Along with the U.S. Agency for International Development, FSI is designing an introductory course on the role of development assistance in diplomacy and foreign policy. The course, to be launched this autumn, will provide an overview of the history of U.S. foreign assistance, U.S. government and international foreign assistance principles and the roles of USAID, State Department and other agencies in furthering U.S. development goals. Students will review dynamics and practices in the field through scenarios in a fictitious developing country. The course will be available on both FSI's and USAID's learning platforms—the first course to be jointly available to both agencies.

The development assistance course will be a prerequisite for a more advanced classroom course on development diplomacy that FSI will introduce early next year. In fact, this type of "blended learning" is already in practice in FSI's Management Division. By taking introductory distance learning courses beforehand, students can come to a classroom with the same baseline knowledge and be ready to tackle more advanced subjects and hands-on practice.

With thousands of online courses available around the clock and accessible from any post, there's always time to learn.

So give it a go. For a complete listing of FSI's distance learning offerings and the steps needed to enroll, visit <http://fsi.state.gov/default.asp?contentID=295>. ■



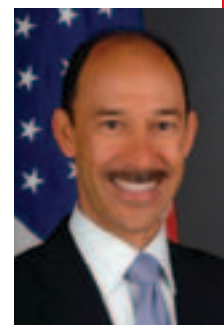
## Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs

David S. Adams of the District of Columbia, a legislative and executive branch official, is the new Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs. Previously, he was deputy assistant secretary for House Affairs. Before that, he was for 24 years a staff member in the House of Representatives working for Rep. Gary Ackerman on committees and in his personal office. Most recently, he was staff director of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia. He is married.



## U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates

Michael H. Corbin of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. Previously, he was deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Before that, he was minister-counselor for Political-Military Affairs in Baghdad and chargé d'affaires in Damascus. Other postings include Cairo, Caracas and Kuwait. Before joining the Foreign Service, he served in the Peace Corps in Mauritania.



## Deputy Secretary of State

William J. Burns of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, personal rank of Career Ambassador, is the new Deputy Secretary of State. Previously, he was under secretary for Political Affairs. He has been ambassador to Russia and Jordan, assistant secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, executive secretary of the Department, special assistant to secretaries of State Warren Christopher and Madeleine Albright and acting director of the Policy Planning Staff. He is married and has two daughters.



## U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan

Ryan C. Crocker of Washington, a retired Career Ambassador in the Senior Foreign Service, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Previously, he was dean and executive professor at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. He was ambassador to Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Kuwait and Lebanon. Other postings include Iran, Qatar and Egypt. He reopened the U.S. Embassy in Kabul in 2002. He is married to Christine Barnes Crocker, a retired member of the Foreign Service.



## U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala

Arnold A. Chacón of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala. He has held leadership positions in Latin America and Europe, including deputy chief of mission in Madrid. He was deputy executive director of the Department and served at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. He is married to fellow Foreign Service officer Alida Chacón. They have three children.



## U.S. Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations

Jeffrey DeLaurentis of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the U.S. Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs and Alternate Representative to the General Assembly of the United Nations. Previously, he was deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Other postings include Havana, Geneva and Bogotá. Before joining the Foreign Service, he held a senior position at the Council on Foreign Relations.





## U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan

Kenneth J. Fairfax of Kentucky, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan. He has been minister-counselor for economic affairs in Baghdad and consul general in Ho Chi Minh City and Krakow. Other postings include Kyiv, Vancouver and Moscow. He also served on the National Security Council staff. Prior to joining the Department, he was president of a small technology company. He is married.



## U.S. Ambassador to Malawi

Jeanine E. Jackson of Wyoming, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi. She served as management counselor in Baghdad from 2009 to 2011, for which she received the Secretary's Distinguished Honor Award. Before that, she was ambassador to Burkina Faso. Other postings include Afghanistan, Kenya, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Switzerland. Her husband Mark is a retired Senior Foreign Service officer.



## U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda

Donald W. Koran of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda. Previously, he was the director of the Africa Analysis office in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Other postings include Havana, Caracas, Antananarivo, Lomé, Rabat, Kigali and the bureaus of African Affairs, International Organization Affairs and Intelligence and Research. He is married and has two daughters.



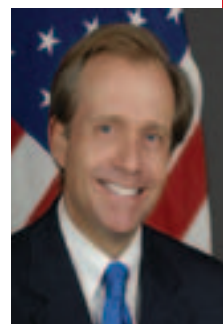
## U.S. Ambassador to Honduras

Lisa J. Kubiske of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Honduras. Previously, she was deputy chief of mission in Brasília. She has also been DCM in Santo Domingo. Other postings include Hong Kong, Shanghai and Mexico. She won an award for valor for coordinating U.S. search teams after major Mexican earthquakes in 1985.



## U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau

Lewis Alan Lukens of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal, to serve concurrently as Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. Previously, he was executive director of the Department's Executive Secretariat. He was consul general in Vancouver and was also posted to Baghdad, Dublin, Sydney, Guangzhou and Abidjan.



## U.S. Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma

Derek J. Mitchell of Connecticut, a foreign affairs and security expert, is the new U.S. Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, he was principal deputy assistant secretary of Defense, Asian and Pacific Security Affairs. Before that, he was director of the Asia Division of the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and founding director of the CSIS Southeast Asia Initiative.



## U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti

Geeta Pasi of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. Previously, she was director of East African Affairs in the Bureau of African Affairs. She was deputy chief of mission in Dhaka and was also posted to Germany, India, Ghana, Romania and Cameroon. Before joining the Department, she was an institutional financial market researcher.



## U.S. Ambassador to Mexico

Earl Anthony Wayne of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, personal rank of Career Ambassador, is the new U.S. Ambassador to Mexico. Previously, he was deputy ambassador in Kabul. Before that, he oversaw U.S. government non-military assistance to Afghanistan. He has been ambassador to Argentina and assistant secretary for Economic and Business Affairs. Other postings include the U.S. Mission to the European Union, Paris and Rabat. He is married and has two children.

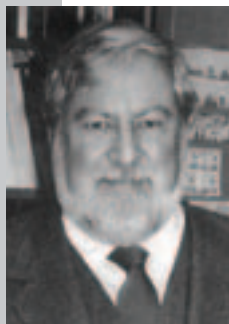


## U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait

Matthew H. Tueller of Utah, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the State of Kuwait. He has been deputy chief of mission in Cairo, political minister counselor in Baghdad and DCM in Kuwait. Other postings include Riyadh, Aden, Doha, London and Amman. He was also deputy director of the Office of Northern Gulf Affairs. He is married and has five children.







## **Dr. Adelphia Dane Bowen Jr.**

84, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 18 of complications from congestive heart failure at his home in Alexandria, Va. He served in the Navy in World War II. He was assigned to Bern, Asunción, Stockholm, Quito, Guatemala City and Santo Domingo. Later, he was a professor of history and economics at Lock Haven University in Pennsylvania, and for many years taught a free history class in Alexandria. He enjoyed chess, genealogy and archaeology and traveled all over the world with his family.



## **Franklin E. Jackson**

93, a retired Foreign Service officer, died April 18 in Elizabethtown, Ky. He served in World War II and joined the Department in 1946. His postings included Brussels, Moscow, Naples, Bangkok, Tripoli, Frankfurt, Belgrade, Sofia, Reykjavik, Managua, Saigon and Taipei. After retiring in 1978, he was executive officer of the Hardin County, Ky., Board of Realtors. He was a Shriner and member of the American Legion.



## **William A. "Bill" Buhr**

88, a retired Foreign Service officer, died June 28 from pulmonary fibrosis in Tustin, Calif. He served in the Marines during World War II. He worked for the United States Information Agency, joined the Foreign Service and was posted to West Africa. After retiring in 1970, he lived in Spain for several years before moving to Tustin, where he volunteered for a number of organizations, including the Orange County Medical Association and Orange County Heart Association. He loved reading, writing and good food.



## **Eleanor Harz Jorden**

88, a renowned Japanese language educator and wife of the late Ambassador William Jorden, died Feb. 18, 2009, of complications from multiple sclerosis in Andover, Mass. She was the founder and director of the Foreign Service Institute's Japanese language program in Tokyo and chair of the East Asian Languages Department and language division of the Vietnam Training Center at FSI. She retired from the Department in 1969 to become a professor of Japanese linguistics and pedagogy at Cornell and Johns Hopkins universities.



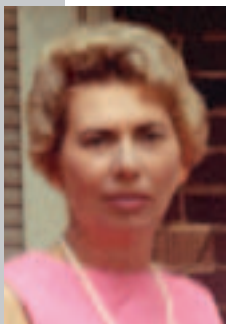
## **Augustine John "AJ" Gorman**

92, a retired Foreign Service officer, died May 26 in Aiken, S.C., after a brief hospital stay. He served in World War II and retired from the Air Force in 1961. He then joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Peru, England, Iraq, Cyprus, Turkey, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Thailand, Israel and Egypt. He retired in 1979. He was a passionate lifelong tennis player, liked to travel and was interested in all things political, scientific, natural and spiritual.



## **Daniel Kiang**

67, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 22 in Potomac, Md., after a long battle with lung cancer. Born in China, he served in the Army Security Agency before joining the Department as a political officer in 1979. He spent most of his career in the East Asia and Pacific Bureau and was posted to London, Beijing, Shenyang, Taipei, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur. After retiring in 2004, he continued to work periodically in the Department.



**Frances Laslie "Fran" Masterman**, 79, a retired Foreign Service employee, died July 24 in Charlotte, N.C., after a short illness. She worked in the airline industry during the 1950s and 60s before joining the Department and living in various world capitals. She was a poodle enthusiast who had many pet poodles and enjoyed dog shows.



**Stuart W. Rockwell**, 94, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 12 of congestive heart failure in Washington, D.C. He served in the Army and Office of Strategic Services during World War II. As ambassador to Morocco in 1971, he survived a coup d'état attempt against the king while visiting the king's palace. He also served in Iran, Madrid, Jerusalem, Ankara and Panama. He retired in 1979 as deputy chief of protocol and then worked for the Department as a consultant. He was a skilled fisherman and avid birdwatcher and gardener.



**Oliver N. Philip**, 84, husband of retired Foreign Service officer Maria Ifill Philip, died Aug. 1 from complications of a stroke. He lived in the Washington, D.C., area. Before his retirement as a career police officer in 1985, he was commissioner of police for the Commonwealth of Dominica. He accompanied his wife to postings in Bridgetown, Suva, Lagos, Georgetown and Bogotá.



**Thomas W. Ryan**, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 20 of lung cancer. He lived in Redding, Calif. He was a pilot before joining the U.S. Information Agency in 1974. He transferred to the Department in 1980. His postings included Caracas, Mexico City, Tokyo, Monrovia, Kathmandu, Beirut, Helsinki and Harare. He retired in 1999.



**Lois G. Randall**, 91, a retired Foreign Service employee, died June 2 in Phoenix, Ariz. Her postings included Bangkok, New Delhi, Jordan, Yemen and Sri Lanka. She enjoyed traveling in Europe, Asia and Africa and, after retirement, to national parks, the Grand Canyon, Hawaii and her hometown of Seattle, Wash.



**Peter N. Synodis**, 83, a retired Foreign Service officer, died June 8 of heart complications. He served in the Coast Guard during World War II and joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1957. His postings included Madrid, Caracas, Mexico City, Casablanca, Niamey, Santiago, Athens and Luluabourg, Democratic Republic of the Congo. After retiring in 1986, he moved to San Diego, Calif., to enjoy his young family and pursue his passion for tennis and painting.

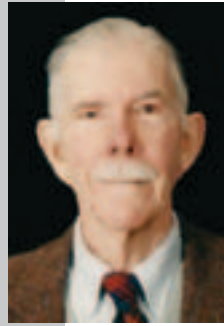




**J. Clagett Taylor Jr.**, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 10 in Sebring, Fla. His postings included Jamaica, Zambia and Venezuela. He also served as a missionary in Rhodesia. After retiring in 1980, he returned to Florida to run the family business. He was active in the Rotary Club, his church and the Grand Prix of Sebring.



**Gunther Uhlmann**, a Foreign Service facility manager, died July 24 at his home in Marco Island, Fla. He served in the Navy before joining the Foreign Service in 1990. He served at numerous overseas missions. He was known for his friendly, easygoing style and technical abilities. He would often be called on to repair critical equipment.



**Hugh M. Woodward**, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 5 of lung cancer. He lived in Gaithersburg, Md. He served in the Army in Europe during World War II. During his career with the U.S. Information Agency and Department he was posted to Switzerland, Bolivia, Germany, Thailand and Argentina. He also directed USIA's Motion Picture and Television Service. After retiring in 1978, he divided his time between Bethesda, Md., and Hancock, N.H. He was active in the Boy Scouts.

## In the Event of a Death...

Questions concerning employee deaths should be directed to the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302. Inquiries concerning deaths of retired employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960. For specific questions on submitting an obituary to *State Magazine*, please contact Bill Palmer at [palmerwr2@state.gov](mailto:palmerwr2@state.gov) or (202) 203-7114.

# Retirements

## Foreign Service

Adanza, Nelia Gallardo	Hellyer, Ada C.
Amend, Kurt E.	Hornbeck, Robert R.
Benack, Gary C.	Jordan, Earl D.
Blake, Fred J.	Kaiser, Sandra
Buenrostro, Kelly Lee	Kwong, Ralph S.
Burke Jr., Thomas F.	McCowan, Michael Charles
Caulfield Jr., John Patrick	Monroe, William T.
Cole, James Francis	Neely, Christine E.
Cunningham, James B.	Nelli, Louis F.
Curtin, Mary T.	Regan, Michael Bernard
Davis, Toby K.	Reynolds, Carol Tyson
Diffily, J.A.	Rigg, Laurence A.
Duffy, Brian F.	Rohn, Douglas
Edwards, Joanne	Rolston, Scott Laird
Gaedtke, Charles A.	Steele, Laurel Elaine
Gagliardi Jr., Edmund J.	Strano, Andrea V.
Gilmore, Michael J.	Taylor, Elaine Beth
Hansen, Rosemary Ellen	Urban, Carol J.
Hawkins, Patricia McMahon	White, Craig Michael

## Civil Service

Babcanec, Mary Patricia	Nanto, Masako K.
Bogert, Joann F.	Oday, William H.
Flynn, Ilona L.	Ogul, James Edward
Greer, Jason H.	Ostrander, Bonnie J.C.
Harrison, Marian A.	Patterson, Avery V.
Herring, Lillie A.E.	Paugh, Pearl A.
Jones, Regenia L.	Pringle, Emma L.
Kern, Jeffrey R.	Ruckman, Kathleen S.
Ko, Paul Chung-Ping	Taylor, Lorraine C.
Korp, Paul Carl	Voss, James G.
Luchi, Paola V.	Williams, Linda M.
Mussman, Anna	

Coming In Our  
November Issue:



OES Battles  
Mercury Pollution

Dance Meets  
Diplomacy  
in Algeria

Posts Abroad Commemorate  
9/11 Losses

...and much more!





## Service - In and Outside of the Department

Working on *State Magazine* regularly reminds me of how Department employees are making life better for American citizens and citizens of the nations where we serve. This magazine's operation also relies upon volunteers: Almost all stories are written by Department employees who receive no compensation for doing so. They are to be congratulated for taking on a task that often must be done in conjunction with a load of existing work.

I salute them. And I salute the other Department employees who in ways big and small are caring for the less fortunate in the United States and elsewhere. Most recently, that caring revealed itself in the Feds Feed Families food drive, which collected thousands of pounds of food for Washington, D.C., area families over the summer. Starting this month, the caring continues with the launch of the Department's 2011 Combined Federal Campaign, which benefits more than 4,000 charities.

Among all the stories of caring in this issue, that which most tugged my heart was that of the volunteer work being done by employees of the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, a busy post in a nation still struggling with the destruction from a January 2010 earthquake. Embassy volunteers have created two programs. In one, 20 embassy volunteers created a monthly reading and life-skills program at a Haitian orphanage. The other involves 21 embassy employees and family members assisting an all-girls school that holds classes in temporary shelters. The volunteers revitalized the school's English Club, now held every Saturday to give 45 primary and secondary students the opportunity to learn and practice English, which is important to economic success.

Meanwhile, in Bangkok, embassy volunteers refurbished computers and the network at a special-needs school, and in Vietnam consulate volunteers built homes as part of Habitat for Humanity, a charity Department staff regularly support.

When it comes to helping Americans here and abroad, Department employees go the extra mile. The chief way most Americans receive the Department's help is with passports and other documentation. To make it more convenient to get

passports, the Bureau of Consular Affairs increased the number of U.S. passport agencies, the latest opening in downtown El Paso, Texas, near the U.S.-Mexico border. CA has lately opened four other new passport agencies, all in areas of heavy cross-border traffic and international travel, and two public counters at existing passport centers in Hot Springs, Ark., and Portsmouth, N.H.

Americans overseas need consular services, too, and those stationed at Yongsan Garrison Army Base, headquarters of U.S. Forces-Korea, now have an onsite consular presence, thanks to the ambitious consular staff of the U.S. Embassy in Seoul. For a year now, members of the consular section have spent five hours on one day each week providing consular services for U.S. service members at the base, obviating the need for service members to drive to the embassy and find parking on Seoul's crowded streets. The branch office provides passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, notariats, Social Security services and answers to immigration questions.

And, since this column dwells upon giving thanks, I lastly want to give thanks for the services of those employees no longer with us, a roster that includes *Dr. Adelpia Dane Bowen Jr., William A. "Bill" Buhr, Augustine John "AJ" Gorman, Franklin E. Jackson, Eleanor Harz Jorden, Daniel Kiang, Frances Laslie "Fran" Masterman, Oliver N. Philip, Lois G. Randall, Stuart W. Rockwell, Thomas W. Ryan, Peter N. Synodis, J. Clagett Taylor Jr., Gunther Uhlmann and Hugh M. Woodward.* ■

### Correction

Due to an error on our part, the story "Embassy-sponsored brass band charms Zimbabwe audiences" in the September issue incorrectly stated that anti-Robert Mugabe TV shows air nightly in Harare. In fact, it is not state-run television but a small theater in Harare that presents these anti-Mugabe plays.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ed Warner".

Ed Warner  
Acting Editor-in-Chief

# WARNING SIGNS YOU MAY HAVE A HARD TIME AT YOUR NEW POST

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DO YOU PRACTICE?



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SPECIAL BANANA NUT SPAM BALLS ARE  
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# ***Happy 50th Anniversary Combined Federal Campaign!***

The Department's Combined Federal Campaign begins Oct. 3 with the theme of "Compassion of Individuals—Power of Community." Join the celebration by pledging your support alongside fellow workers in a powerful community of caring.

**COMPASSION**  
OF INDIVIDUALS  
**POWER**  
OF COMMUNITY

